

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 29

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 106

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 29—Relative to the Joint Legislative Committee on Emergency Services and Homeland Security.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 6, 2005.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 29, Kehoe. Emergency services and homeland security.

Under existing law, the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission is established in state government by action of the Governor to investigate the circumstances surrounding the October 2003 fires in southern California and that commission recommended the establishment of a permanent Joint Legislative Committee on Emergency Services and Homeland Security.

This measure would create the Joint Legislative Committee on Emergency Services and Homeland Security, with specified membership of each house of the Legislature. The joint committee would be constituted as an investigating committee of the houses, and its powers would include making recommendations as to legislation and forming technical advisory committees to assist it in carrying out its duties. The joint committee would continue in existence until November 30, 2006.

WHEREAS, California is the site of some of the most extraordinary natural disasters in North America, including fires, earthquakes, floods, landslides, mudslides, insect infestations, and drought; and

WHEREAS, California is the nation's most populous state, home to many of the nation's most desirable tourist destinations, and home to many of the nation's most critical military installations, and as such California is especially sensitive to the threat of terrorism; and

WHEREAS, In October 2003, southern California experienced the most devastating wild land/urban interface fire in the history of California; nearly 740,000 acres burned, 246 people were injured, and 24 Californians lost their lives, including one firefighter, and more than 3,600 homes, 36 commercial properties, and 1,169 outbuildings were destroyed; and

WHEREAS, On November 2, 2003, then-Governor Gray Davis and then-Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger established a Blue Ribbon Fire Commission representing federal, state, and local agencies, the firefighting community, and affected communities; and

WHEREAS, The Blue Ribbon Fire Commission was charged with hearing testimony on what worked and what did not work in the efforts to fight the October 2003 fires and with reviewing and providing recommendations on necessary improvements to prevent and better respond to these fires in the future; and

WHEREAS, The commission, in its report to the Governor, made a number of recommendations and prioritized their importance, including the establishment of a permanent Joint Legislative Committee on Emergency Services and Homeland Security; and

WHEREAS, The joint committee has explored the report of the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission and has taken action in support of the commission's findings and recommendations; and

WHEREAS, The members of the joint committee recognize that the work of the joint committee needs to continue; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Joint Legislative Committee on Emergency Services and Homeland Security is hereby established; and be it further

Resolved, That the joint committee shall consist of 14 members, who shall include seven Assembly Members appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly, four from the party having the largest number of Members in the Assembly and three from the party having the second largest number of Members, and seven Senators appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, four from the party having the largest number of Members in the Senate and three from the party having the second largest number of Members; and be it further

Resolved, That the joint committee shall be under the direction of a chairperson and vice chairperson that shall alternate between the Assembly and the Senate from session to session and that initially the joint committee shall be under the direction of a Senate Chairperson and an Assembly Vice Chairperson, appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules and the Speaker of the Assembly, respectively; and be it further

Resolved, That the joint committee may provide a public forum for discussion of California's emergency services and homeland security and related issues to natural or human-caused threats to California; and be it further

Resolved, That the joint committee, in order to assist it in carrying out its duties, may form technical advisory committees, including representatives from the public safety and emergency services disciplines, to help evaluate federal, state, and local strategies, provide technical assistance on an ongoing basis, and take active roles in supporting the passage of any necessary legislation; and be it further

Resolved, That the joint committee may work in cooperation with the Governor and the standing committees and subcommittees of the Legislature to address the level of support necessary for public safety and related agencies to implement essential emergency services and homeland security policies; and be it further

Resolved, That the joint committee may periodically report its progress and make recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature; and be it further

Resolved, That the joint committee and its members shall have and exercise all of the rights, duties, and powers conferred upon investigating committees and their members by the Joint Rules of the Assembly and

Senate as they are adopted and amended from time to time, which provisions are incorporated herein and made applicable to this committee and its members; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate Committee on Rules may make moneys available from the Senate Operating Fund, as it deems necessary, to pay expenses of the joint committee and its members, and that any expenditure of moneys shall be made in compliance with policies set forth by the Senate Committee on Rules and shall be subject to the approval of the Senate Committee on Rules; and be it further

Resolved, That the joint committee is authorized to act until November 30, 2006, when its existence shall terminate; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.